



HALMATURUS DERBIANUS. Gray

HALMATURUS DERBIANUS, *Gray.*

Derby's Wallaby.

FACE AND FORE PART OF A MALE AND OF A FEMALE, OF THE NATURAL SIZE.

My figures of this animal were taken from specimens procured on Kangaroo Island, at the entrance of Spencer's Gulf. I mention this particularly, because I have given the name of *Halmaturus Houtmanni* to an animal inhabiting the Abrolhos of Western Australia, which Mr. Waterhouse considers may be only a variety of the present species; but this is a point which time alone can determine. These insular animals are extremely puzzling, and considerable judgment is required in ascertaining their specific value.

The *Halmaturus Derbianus* is somewhat allied to the *H. Parma*; still they are unquestionably distinct. They form, with *H. dorsalis*, a little section of the group quite different from that constituted by *H. Thetidis*, *H. stigmaticus*, *H. Billardieri*, and *H. brachyurus*.

The *H. Derbianus* is very numerous in all the thick brushes of the islands on which it has been found. It is bustling and quick in all its actions; and it is only by the aid of dogs that it can be forced from its retreat, or to leave the numerous runs formed by it beneath the underwood in all directions.

For the pleasing life-like representation of this species, much credit is due to Mr. Richter; for nothing could be more faithful.

The reader is referred to the description accompanying the reduced figures given on the next Plate for a full account of this animal.



HALMATURUS DERBIANUS: Gray

H.C. Beckler del.

C. Hutton sculp. Imp.

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- Halmaturus Derbianus*, Gray in Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. i. new ser. p. 583.—Gould, Mon. of Macropodidæ, pl. .
 —Gray, List of Spec. of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 91.
Macropus (Halmaturus) Derbianus, Waterh. in Jard. Nat. Lib. *Marsupialia*, p. 234, pl. 21.—Ib. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 154.
Halmaturus Houtmanni, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., pt. xii. p. 31 ?.—Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 156 ?.
 ————— *Eugenii*, Less. Man. de Mamm., p. 227 ?.
 ————— *Emiliae*, Gray, List of Spec. of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 90 ?.
Bangap, Aborigines of Perth in Western Australia.

ALTHOUGH the name of *Derbianus* is retained for this small species of *Halmaturus*, I am by no means certain that it has any claims to priority; in all probability the older name of *Eugenii* had reference to this animal; Mr. Waterhouse also is of opinion that an animal which I have called *Houtmanni* is merely a variety of the same species. Before me at this moment, while writing the present article, is my type specimen of *Houtmanni* from Wallaby Island, Houtmann's Abrolhos, and two specimens of *Derbianus* from Garden Island lying about five miles off the mouth of Swan River; now the former certainly differs from the latter in being of a darker colour, in having less rufous on the shoulders and rump, and in having stouter legs and feet; notwithstanding I bow to Mr. Waterhouse's opinion, and regard them as local varieties of one and the same species; and I incline to do so the more readily from feeling convinced, after having for a series of years paid considerable attention to these and other nearly allied species, that there is an animal of this family peculiar to the scrubby islands lying off the southern and western coasts of Australia, and one only, and that that one is the species under consideration, whatever its specific name may be. Up to the present time I have never seen examples from the mainland, the brushes of which lying between the mountain ranges and the coast are all tenanted by their own peculiar species, such as *Thetidis*, *Dama*, &c., whilst the Brigaloe brush of the interior has also an animal of this section peculiar to it—the *H. dorsalis*. The *H. Derbianus*, then, inhabits all the islands lying off the west coast, and extends round to those of the south-west as far as Kangaroo Island in Spencer's Gulf, where it is abundant.

Like many others of the small Wallabies, the present species loves to dwell among the densest under-wood: hence the almost impenetrable scrub of dwarf *Eucalypti*, which covers nearly the whole of Kangaroo Island, will always afford it a secure asylum, from which in all probability it will never be extirpated,—the vegetation being too green and humid to be burnt, and the land too poor to render it worth the expense of clearing. It is very abundant in the ravines and gullies, through which it makes innumerable runs; and such is the dense nature of the vegetation, that nothing larger than a dog can follow it; still it is taken by men residing on the island in the greatest abundance, both for the sake of its skin and its flesh: they procure it principally by snares, a simple noose placed on the outskirts of the brush; but they also shoot it when it appears on the open glades at night.

Considerable difference exists in this, as well as in the other allied species, in the colour of the hair, which varies very much, not only in the intensity of its hue, but also in being much redder in some specimens than in others.

Fur long and moderately soft; face grizzled grey, reddish and dark brown; on the upper lip a buffy-white mark which extends backwards under the eye, and blends with the general colour of the face; back of the neck, shoulders and arms rufous; a blackish mark commences at the occiput, and continues downwards until it becomes lost in the colouring of the back, which is grizzled black and dull white, caused by the middle portion of each hair being dull white, and the tips black, the base of all the fur being deep-blue grey; rump, base of the tail, hind legs and tarsi grizzled with rufous and black, the former colour predominating; throat, chest and all the under surface buffy white; arms the same as the tarsi, but rather darker; under side of the tail buff.

	Male.	
	feet.	inches.
Length from the nose to the extremity of the tail	3	1
„ of tail	1	1½
„ „ tarsus and toes, including the nail		6
„ „ arm and hand, including the nail		4½
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear . . .		4½
„ „ ear		2¼

One of the accompanying Plates represents the head and fore quarters of the natural size, the other the entire animal much reduced.